

21-23 West Market Street (commercial building)
York
York County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1313

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. PA-1313

21-23 WEST MARKET STREET
(commercial building)

Location: 21-23 West Market Street, York, York County,
Pennsylvania.

USGS York Quadrangle Map, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 18.351340.4424780.

Present Owner: City of York (1978).

Present Occupant: Vacant.

Present Use: Vacant, to be demolished by the City of York in order
to implement a program of downtown improvements,
including the construction of Cherry Lane walkway.

Significance: 21-23 West Market Street, built circa 1879, has had a
long history of varied commercial uses. The
building, notable for its simple ornamentation is an
integral part of the West Market Streetscape.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. History of Structure:

In 1859 John Leiben's half lot (No. 72) was sheriffed by Samuel Forscht. The parcel, purchased by Valentine Erney, at that time contained a two story home (probably frame) with a brick back building, rough cast, and a two story, detached brick stable and slaughter house.

Shortly thereafter Valentine Erney replaced the frame house with a larger, three story brick stone "business house" and made improvements on the brick stable. The Erneys, a well-to-do family, operated a candy company. The new building served as a store on the first floor with the family residence on the second and third stories. The Confectionary remained at 21-23 W. Market Street until 1882 when Valentine Erney died interstate.

In 1883 the property was awarded to Valentine's brother, Joseph. Joseph Erney sold the building that same year to Amos Hoffman.

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Hoffman immediately opened his clothing store in the building and in 1886 demolished the old stable or renovated it to serve his own needs. The following year Hoffman conveyed half interest and ownership of the building to H.C. Brubaker.

In 1901, after Brubaker's death, his widow sold her half interest in the building back to Hoffman. Hoffman's Clothing Store continued in operation until the teens. By 1910 Charles Hoffman's photography studio shared the premises with the men's clothing store.

In 1923, at the death of Amos Hoffman, No. 21-23 passed into his estate. As executor, Harvey A. Gross rented the building to a number of businesses. By 1925 the Hoffman contained Wilbur C. Hoffman's real estate office, 3 photographer's studios, a doctor's office, an insurance company, an outfitter's company, and one apartment.

In 1926 the building was purchased by Charles Wilbur Hoffman and in the next decade it contained a news photo service, a real estate office and a dress shop.

Washoak Realty bought the the property in 1943 and leased the premises to Melville Realty, a shoe store (Ring's Shoes) and a candle shop. By the mid 1950's the shoe store was still present but the candle shop had been replaced by the Loft Candy Corporation.

In the 60's Ring's Shoes was replaced by Paragon Shoes and the rear detached brick building was torn down to supply more parking space. Thom McAn's Shoes replaced Loft Candies in the same decade, but by this time much of the building was vacant.

Yorktown Royal Jewelers was the only business in the building by the early 1970's. In 1978 the City of York purchased the structure (by then vacant), and the building was demolished for the Cherry Lane extension from Philadelphia to Market Street.

B. Bibliography:

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August 1978

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: 21-23 West Market Street, a three-story commercial structure, was built in the 1860s-1870s. Its simple ornamentation contributes to the West Market streetscape.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair, although there has been water damage to the upper floors.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The building has a three story rectangular main block with a two story rear wing. It measures 31'2" (four-bay front) x 66'7"; the rear wing measures 26'5" x 75'8".
2. Foundations: Limestone and brick.
3. Wall construction, finish: The walls are of painted brick with wooden trim. On the first story modern storefronts of metal, glass, wood, and brick have been added.
4. Structural system, framing: Load-bearing brick walls with wooden floor and roof construction.

5. Chimneys: An interior brick chimney, located on the rear wing.

6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The original doorways have been replaced by modern storefronts with recessed plate glass doors.
- b. Windows: There are eight windows on the upper two stories. They are double hung sash with two over one light. The windows have decorative lintels with sawtooth edging along the bottom.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The main block has a gable roof covered with raised tin; the rear wing has a shed roof covered with raised tin.
- b. Cornice, eaves: There is an elaborately carved and incised wooden cornice across the south (front) elevation with paired decorative brackets.
- c. Dormers: There is a modern shed dormer on the south (front) elevation.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: The floors are of earth and concrete in the rear wing, and concrete in the front portion. The foundation is whitewashed limestone and brick, with exposed joists and some storage carrels. The wing is separated from the main block by a limestone and brick wall with a two light sash. The basement is in fair condition.
- b. First floor: The first floor is composed of two identical commercial shapes with small rooms to the rear. They have been heavily altered and no longer retain their original character. The rear wing is separated from the main block by a brick wall; it can be entered from 21 West Market. The condition of both sides is poor.

- c. Second floor: The second floor has been altered into two large rooms. Staircases were removed and access was provided to the adjoining structure to the west. There are two major areas: the first is the large open area above the rear wing; the second is the space in the front block which has been divided into office spaces. The partitions are a mixture of plaster, drywall, birch plywood and glass. This floor is connected into 25 West Market Street with a 6' break at the rear of the three-story block. The condition of the floor is poor due to water seepage.
- d. Third floor: The third floor is composed of one large room with access to 25 West Market Street. There is another set of small cubicals similar to those on the second floor in the rear over the wing. The condition is poor due to water seepage from the leaky roof.
- 2. Stairways: There is a plaster-box staircase for service purposes on the west side of the building. Entrance to the second and third floors is from 25-27 West Market Street.
- 3. Floors: Asphalt tile or linoleum over soft woods.
- 4. Walls: Painted plaster.
- 5. Doors: Burnished aluminum.
- 6. Trim: 3" face casing.
- 7. Hardware: Knob-type, non-locking door latches.
- 8. Heating: City steam with cast iron radiators.
- 9. Privy: There was a stone lined pit situated within the rear addition.

D. Site:

- 1. General Setting: The structure is situated on Market Street, facing south with the building lot extending to Clark Alley.
- 2. Outbuildings: There are currently no outbuildings on the site, although there was a warehouse (demolished 1953).
- 3. Well: The well is an oblong shape with a central dividing wall which separates the shafts for 21-23 and 25-27. The depth of the wall was nearly 20'.

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4. Walks: Between the structure and the adjoining one to the east, there is a brick walkway which connected Market Street to the Market.

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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the City of York in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and a Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. John A. Burns, AIA, was the HABS project coordinator. The written data was prepared by John Schein, Executive Director, Historic York Incorporated, who directed the research; Ray Hearne, Roark Mitzel, of Historic York Incorporated; and Landon Reisinger, York County Historical Society, in August 1978. The data was edited in the HABS office by Mary Beth Betts in May 1979. Photographs were taken by William J. Schintz, in August 1978.